

Let Someone Else Take Care of It, Right?

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What causes almost 90 percent of the mishaps in the Navy? Human error!

Two young Sailors were painting their ship's hull, and two major discrepancies with their attire jumped out at even the most casual observer: Neither fellow had on safety goggles, and neither Sailor's life vest complied with Navy and maintenance (PMS) guidelines (the jackets didn't have modification straps). I counted at least five Sailors who walked past these two shipmates and didn't correct the glaring safety discrepancies.

How many times have you walked by something—aboard ship, pierside, or elsewhere, and, though you knew something wasn't right, you did nothing about it? What the heck, let someone else get involved. It's easier that way, right?

I've visited more than 140 ships during the past 19 months and cannot count the number of times I had to correct deficiencies which others simply ignored by walking right by them. I don't look for hazards only because I work at the Naval Safety Center—I do it because *Sailors are supposed to look out for their ship and for their shipmates!*

Maybe as individuals we see a problem and cannot solve it on the spot, but we certainly should turn to someone who can. Think ahead and ask yourself or your work group the following questions before jumping into a situation—whether you're a casual observer or a participant. Remember, though, the worst thing you can do is absolutely nothing!

✓ What can go wrong? How can something get screwed up?

✓ What can I do about it?

✓ If I cannot do anything, whom do I tell? ☎

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These Sailors are not dressed for the occasion—goggles aren't being worn, and the Sailor on the left needs to tie the neck-strap on his life vest.

Navy photo by GM1(SW) Thomas J. Lowney